



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

N.C.
922.9
Mil.H.

NC.

922.9

Mil. H



Digitized by Google



303948884%

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET.



CARDING.
(*La Cardeuse.*)

JEAN-FRANÇOIS MILLET.

TWENTY ETCHINGS AND WOODCUTS

REPRODUCED IN FAC-SIMILE,

AND

A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE,

BY

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

"And the Bible, François, have you forgotten it? and the Psalms, do you ever read them?"

"They are my breviary," said Millet, "I get from them all that I do."

SENSIER'S *Millet*, p. 108.

INDIA PROOF EDITION,

Limited to 500 Copies.

LONDON:
THE FINE ART SOCIETY,
LIMITED.

NEW YORK: SCRIBNER & WELFORD.

1881.





MILLET: A BIOGRAPHY.

IT is characteristic of the French mind to be slow and stubborn in its apprehension of new ideas, and to be quick to assimilate and adopt them, once their apprehension is accomplished. Such Frenchmen, therefore, as are unlucky enough to be intellectually ahead of their epoch, are assured beforehand of a portion mainly compacted of misery and disappointment, and may be said to work not so much for their contemporaries as for their more or less immediate posterity. They produce their discovery to a generation unprepared and unreceptive; and it is considered with derision, or overlooked with indifference. Presently it becomes familiar, and so—in a certain sense—respectable. It puts off its absurdity as it ceases to be abnormal and strange; and, in course of time, it achieves due recognition, is converted into a common possession, and is utilized and wrought at with enthusiasm. Meanwhile, the man originally responsible for it has disappeared, not trailing clouds of glory, but clouds of penury and wretchedness. This has only to be known to be universally deplored. He enters into a kind of apotheosis forthwith. He was penniless and hungry while he lived; but he is famous after death, and men may wax fat and rich in praising him. The æsthetic history of modern France abounds in instances and examples. The hot and heady valour of the men of 1830 notwithstanding, it is evident that the theory and practice of Romanticism were wholly successful in not a single one of the arts. It was in literature that the

B

most brilliant victories of the revolutionary party were won; but neither Balzac nor Dumas were ever recognized officially for great writers, and there were scores of others as unfortunate, if not as powerful, as they. It was worse still in music. Berlioz, perhaps the most original and able master since Beethoven, could only live by writing articles, and to get a hearing for his works was obliged to produce them abroad. And in painting it was worst of all. Delacroix, in spite of his prodigious talent and his splendid strength of character, was never acclaimed as he deserved until he was well nigh at the end of his career. "Voilà trente ans que je suis livré aux bêtes," he said; and the saying was a fair description of his position. Théodore Rousseau, one of the kings of modern landscape—"le Grand Refusé," as he was called—was thrust out of the Salon ten or twelve years running. Corot, the inventor of a new principle in landscape, spent the greater part of his life in trying to persuade the dealers to buy for next to nothing canvasses they afterwards thought cheap at any price he pleased to put on them. Méryon, who is just now a steady source of income to the print-sellers, had a public some ten or fifteen strong at the most, could seldom or never get a franc each for proofs of his finest etchings, and died a madman and an utter failure. With Millet, a man of incomparably greater mind and stronger character, it was almost as bad as with Méryon. The message he had to deliver was one spoken from himself; and he paid to the uttermost farthing that penalty the world is wont to exact from his kind. His story is one as fruitful of mortifying and humiliating reflections as exists in the annals of art.

I.

IN the commune of Gréville, on the iron-bound coast of La Manche, stands the little hamlet of Gruchy. It is built at the sea's edge, on the granite cliffs of the Hogue, overlooking the stormy waters of Cherbourg Roads; but it is situate, for all that, in a fertile and

pleasant country, rich in grass and corn and wood, covered with herds and flocks, and peopled with a race of husbandmen. It was there, on the 4th of October, 1814, that Millet was born.

He came of excellent stock on both sides, and is, indeed, as admirable an expression of the nobler type of peasant as is known. A remarkable man himself, he had remarkable men and women for his kindred. His father's mother, Louise Jumelin, was a person of great depth and strength of character. Robust and energetic, profoundly religious, uncommonly intelligent, full of sentiment and decision, she came of a family of brothers and sisters who, in their way, were as exceptional as herself. One had been a chemist of repute, and had worked with Spallanzani; another had been a monk; a third, who was a miller, had been deeply versed in the logic and literature of Port-Royal. One of her husband's uncles, Charles Millet, a priest released from his vows by the Revolution, was an almost ideal type of the working country curate; he was good, sweet-tempered, thoughtful, prodigiously laborious, and gifted with enormous strength; and

"Christ's lore and His Apostles twelve,
He taught, and first he followed it himself."

Another Millet was a man of great hardihood and endurance, to whom it was pastime to walk without stopping from Gruchy to Paris. Their nephew, the painter's father, was an excellent man; he was pure in thought, clean in life, very pious, and full of a certain cheerful seriousness of temper and of mind; and in his simple, inarticulate way he was an artist. He was passionately fond of music, and he was the precentor of Gruchy church, where he led and trained a choir that was the envy and admiration of all the country side. He would often try to model in clay, and to carve in wood with his pocket-knife; and he loved to point out to his son the beauty and charm he saw in the landscape in whose midst they dwelt, and to make him feel the wonder and the mystery in the changing seasons, in the springing of wheat, in the branching majesty of woods, in the quiet increase of grass and

flowers. His wife, a Henry, or Henry du Perron, was one of a race of rich yeomen gone to decay. She was a good woman and a good mother. Her nature was not mystical and imaginative like her mother-in-law's and her husband's, nor ardent and resolute like that of the Millet brothers; but she had plenty of intelligence, and she was rich in sentiment and the emotional capacity, as certain of her letters to her son attest. She bore her husband nine children; one of them the greatest painter of his epoch, while at least two others appear to have been, in some degree, artists also. The eldest was a girl; the second was the painter of the *Angelus* and of *Death and the Woodman*.

He was his grandmother's godson, and he was christened Jean, after his father, and François, after the Saint of Assisi, his godmother's patron. It was under her care and guidance, and those of his uncle, the Abbé Charles, that he was reared; and the dignified and laborious earnestness of these governors of his was a chief influence in his life, and a distinguishing feature in his character. The Millet family led an existence almost patriarchal in its unalterable simplicity and diligence; and the boy grew up in an environment of toil and sincerity and devoutness. He was fostered upon the Bible and the great book of nature. He dwelt between the eternal majesty of the sea and the solemn beauty of the wide champaign. From the first he was familiar with the spectacle of the generous strife of man and the elements. When he woke, it was to the lowing of cattle and the song of birds; he was at play all day among "the sights and sounds of the open landscape;" and he slept with the murmur of the spinning-wheel in his ears, and the memory of the evening prayer in his heart. In a little while he learned to read and write, and he was then able to search the Scriptures for himself, and, in time, to study the men of Port-Royal. He learned Latin from the parish priest and from his uncle Charles; and he soon came to be a student of Virgil, who was one of his idols always, and who was as precious to him as he was to a man of a very different type—the musician, Hector Berlioz. While

he was yet young in his teens he began to follow his father out into the fields; and thenceforward, as became the eldest boy in a large family, he worked hard at grafting and ploughing, sowing and reaping, scything and shearing and planting, and all the many duties of husbandmen. Meanwhile, he had taken to drawing, and his advance towards a certain sort of proficiency appears to have been rapid in the extreme. The mystery of foreshortening was revealed to him by the sight of a crooked old wayfarer, whom he followed home one day from mass. He copied everything he saw, and he produced not only studies, but compositions also; till at last his father was moved to take him from farming, and have him taught to be an artist at Cherbourg. The young man at once prepared a couple of drawings, to be shown, as proofs of his proficiency, to the painter whose advice it was proposed to ask. In one of these—a composition, of peasants carrying bread, by a cottage, under a starry sky—he revealed himself as he was presently to be; and he was wont to say in after life that it anticipated all his art, as Ingres was wont to say that the Ingres who, at thirteen, had copied and understood the *Madonna della Sedia* was the Ingres of the *Apothéose* and the *Saint-Symphorien*. The artist to whom these works were submitted was a strange, erratic creature, named Mouchel; and Mouchel, after refusing to believe that they had been done by the young countryman he saw before him, consented to receive their author as a pupil. The connexion thus formed lasted for two months only, during the whole of which time Millet did very much as he pleased, Mouchel refusing to do more than advise him in his choice of pictures to copy, and vaguely indicate to him his mistakes. Then came the death of the elder Millet, of brain fever (1836), and the return of the apprentice-painter to Gruchy.

He was ready and anxious to take his father's place as the family breadwinner and chief; but of this his mother and grandmother would not hear. The dead man had determined that his son should be a painter, and to the two women nearest him on earth the determination was sacred. It was God's will, they said, that their

lad should be a great and famous man; and he must go back to Cherbourg forthwith. Back to Cherbourg he went accordingly. Certain notables of the place were interested in him, from seeing him at work in the picture-gallery, and in no great while he was introduced to the studio of the local artist, one Langlois, a pupil of Gros, and a nobody of the first magnitude. Langlois did as little in the way of teaching for his new pupil as Mouchel had done before him. Millet appears to have perplexed and frightened his master a good deal. He was so utterly unlike the ordinary art-student, in all he said and did, that Langlois knew not how to deal with him, and dealt with him as little as possible. The consequence was that he was left to do very much as he would. He read voraciously, and he read well. He learned to know Hugo and Shakespeare and Byron; he became an adept in Scott and Goethe, in Béranger and Chateaubriand and Fennimore Cooper; he studied Montaigne and Augustine, and Jerome and Pascal; Paul de Kock was not too low for him, nor was Homer too high. In literature, however, as in painting, he had the heroic instinct and the heroic sentiment, and he loved only the best and the strongest. He was already well versed in good authors when he came to Paris, some twelve or fourteen months after his return to Cherbourg, and the circle of his reading went on widening till the end of his life. Years afterwards he is found delighting in Burns and in François Hugo's translation of Shakespeare, and studying Theocritus, and even planning a version of certain idylls. Meanwhile, he worked hard, not only at his books, but at copying such master-pictures as the town gallery contained; and he is known to have made studies, among other painters, from Philippe de Champagne, Van Loo, Schedone, Van der Mol, and Jacob Jordaens. His copying and continual presence in the gallery appear to have occasioned considerable excitement, as those who know the novels of Flaubert and Champfleury will readily believe; and he became a kind of local celebrity, so that, on Langlois' application and advice, the Municipal Council made no great difficulty in voting him a yearly allowance

of 400 francs, to enable him to pursue his studies in Paris. This was soon afterwards supplemented by a stipend of 600 francs from the Council-General of the Department; so that when Millet left Gruchy for the capital, he was, to all appearance, in comfortable circumstances enough. As a matter of fact, however, the annuity was not long continued, and while it lasted, was seldom or never paid until it had got a good while overdue.

II.

It was in the January of 1837—some fourteen or fifteen months after the father's death—that Millet, furnished with sundry letters of introduction, and bound for the studio of Paul Delaroche, arrived in Paris. His people had parted from him with tears and misgivings; and he knew, as well as they did, that he had come to a terrible place, and one abounding in temptations and wickedness. But he had a few hundred francs in his pocket, and the treasures of the Luxembourg and the Louvre were, at last, within his reach. And it is to be conjectured that he was tolerably happy, though he disliked the city itself, and was not at all in sympathy with the facts and circumstances of his environment.

The Romantic movement was in the full tide of prosperity. The victory of *Hernani* was already ancient history. Hugo had written *Notre-Dame*, and most of his plays and many volumes of verse. Musset had published *Rolla* and the *Nuits*. Balzac was the author of the *Père Goriot*, and the *Lys dans la Vallée*, and *Eugénie Grandet*; Gautier, of *Mdlle. de Maupin* and the *Comédie de la Mort*; George Sand, of *Léone Léoni* and *Jacques*, and a score of wild and eloquent novels more. Delacroix had painted the *Hamlet*, the *Massacre de Scio*, the *Marino Faliero*, the *Bataille de Nancy*, the *Révolution de Juillet*, and many a famous picture besides; and Corot, the Deverias, Ary Scheffer, Rousseau, Jules Dupré, Delaroche, and Camille Flers, were working their hardest and their best beside

him. Berlioz was already the musician of *Harold*, and the *Fantastique*, and *Benvenuto Cellini*. David d'Angers and Barye were doing excellent things in marble. The stage was triumphant in the presence of Dorval and Frédérick and Bocage, and glorious in the dramas of Dumas. Evidently, it was not for lack of provocation and example that Millet, already prepared by a year of appropriate literature at Cherbourg, did not instantly become as egregious a Romanticist as the magnificent Gautier himself, and fall to smoking papelitos, and taking liquor out of skull-cups with the best of them. The truth is that he was the last in the world to be impressed with Romanticism, either practical or in theory. He had, in full measure, the virtues of sincerity and strength; his imagination was grandiose and solemn in cast and in kind; he had been reared upon the Scriptures, and he was familiar with heroic literature; he preferred dignity to effect, and truth to falsehood; his ambitions were lofty, and he took life very earnestly and seriously. And from the freakishness and affectation of Romanticism, from its vulgarity and noisiness and trickery, he turned aside, discontented and surprised. For the genius and accomplishment of Delacroix he cherished a life-long admiration, and he had a sincere regard for what is good and honest in the work of Hugo. But the barrenness and insincerity of painters like Boulanger, and Delaroche, and Scheffer, and Eugène Devéria, were painfully apparent to him; he disliked the theatre, and thought its frequentation bad for the production of earnest art; he was more deeply interested in Virgil and in Homer than in *Albertus* and *Mardoche*. With the pictures in the Luxembourg—those of Eugène Delacroix alone excepted—he was bitterly disappointed. He abandoned them instantly for those in the Louvre, and there, among the Old Masters, he found friends. Michelangelo and Poussin overwhelmed him with admiration and astonishment; their influence became at once the greatest fact in his life. Next to these in his regard came the Pre-Raphaelite Masters—Mantegna and Angelico and Filippo Lippi; he was fascinated by them, they appealed directly to his

understanding and his emotion, and he was never weary of considering their work. Rembrandt he did not know till later on:— “Il ne me repoussait pas, mais m’aveuglait,” he says; “je pensais qu’il fallait faire des stations avant d’entrer dans le génie de cet homme.” Velasquez he admired discreetly; he liked Murillo in portraits, and Ribera in his *Centaurs* and his *Saint Bartholomew*; he was profoundly impressed by Titian and Giorgione; he cared little for Watteau; and as strength and sincerity were the objects of his pursuit, he would have given all Boucher for a single one of Rubens’ essays in the nude. He made no copies; he looked and pondered, and that was enough. He had come to Paris with his ideas in art “toutes faites,” he says; and this study of method and sentiment in the Old Masters went on with him for many years. It was incomparably the greater, and the more important part of such æsthetic education as he had; and he was himself the author of it.

Meanwhile, he had got early into difficulties, and had had an experience that would not be out of place in the blackest page in Balzac. He had been received into the house of a man for whom he had a letter of introduction from people in Cherbourg, and he had given all his money to his hosts, to keep for him and dole out to him as it was needed. The lady fell in love with him, and finding that he did not, or would not, respond to her advances, confiscated the whole deposit, and left him penniless. He quitted the house at once, and, having found a garret to harbour in, entered on his work under Delaroche. With his fellow-students, among whom were Gendron, Couture, Edouard Frère, Yvon, and Hébert, he was far from being a favourite. They were scornfully amused with his rusticity (they called him the “Wild Man of the Woods”), and with the original and unconventional way he had of doing things; and he had a very hearty dislike for their boyish wit and levity, and declined to interest himself in their pastimes or to admire their habits of thought or their way of life. In addition, he was suspicious of restraint, he had a poor opinion of his master’s talent

c

and accomplishment, and he thought nothing of the process of education that obtained in the *atelier*. Delaroche, who was a pompous and theatrical person, seems, for his part, to have regarded Millet with a curious mixture of interest and repulsion. He recognized the young man's power and promise, but he did very little more; and it was not long ere they parted company. Millet had determined to compete for the *Prix de Rome*, and to that end had finished and sent in his drawing. Delaroche looked at it, and was much impressed by it. He had decided, however, that his representative was to be a favourite pupil of his, an insignificant lad named Roux; and of this he informed the Wild Man of the Woods without delay, promising, if he would withdraw his design, to put him forward for the prize next year. Millet replied by leaving the *atelier*. He drew from the model at a school kept by a master named Suiffe; and with a friend of his, a certain Marolle, he took a little studio for himself. Here he painted portraits at five francs apiece, and produced sham Watteaus and Bouchers, which Marolle took round to the dealers, and sold—when he sold them at all—at the buyer's own prices. In the intervals of production Millet read hard at the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, where he assimilated all he could get—drawings, letters, treatises, engravings—of the work of Durer, Jean Cousin, Leonardo, Poussin, and Michelangelo, the two last especially. In 1840 he sent in a couple of portraits for exhibition at the Salon, and one, the worst, was accepted. This scrap of encouragement notwithstanding, the position seemed to him, for the moment at least, no longer tenable. There were no more portraits to paint, and the dealers were tired of Watteau and Boucher. There was nothing for it but to go back to Cherbourg, and try for work there; and this, accordingly, Millet did.

In Cherbourg, Millet got instantly into hot water with the Municipal Council, over a commission for the portrait of a prominent citizen (lately deceased) whom he had never seen, and of whom he could get no sort of likeness save one taken thirty or forty years before. As was to be expected, the picture was voted a failure, and

the Council declared its bargain off, and refused to pay. After that, Millet lived for some time by painting cheap portraits and signs. Then, in the November of 1841, he married his first wife, Pauline Ono, and early in the spring of the next year he returned to Paris. There the life he lived was a harder one than ever. Either his pictures were abused, or they passed unnoticed; he had a sick wife to keep (she died, childless, in 1844, after two years and five months of marriage), and if he sold at all, it was for a few francs only, which were often difficult to get; and he could barely find himself in bread and colours. In 1844, he exhibited a pastel good enough to attract the attention of Diaz, and betook himself to Cherbourg once more. He had learned to paint very prettily and well, the journals had spoken of his pastel, and he had no difficulty in getting commissions. He produced a number of portraits—rich in tone, harmonious and charming in tint, brilliant and gallant in handling, ingenious and flowery and mannered in style, the antipodes of his later and more personal work—and some few pictures; and he refused a place as drawing-master at Cherbourg School. Late in the year 1845, he married Catherine Lemaire, a peasant like himself, the mother of his nine children, and his faithful and devoted friend and companion for thirty years; and the pair proceeded to Havre, on their way to Paris. There they remained for several weeks, during which time Millet made many admirers, and became almost popular. He produced some Bouchers, some portraits, and some essays in mythology and the pastoral; an exhibition of his works was opened; and he came on to Paris upwards of 900 francs the richer for his stay. It was the first and only glimpse of popularity he ever saw.

Millet lived for the next four years in Paris. This was his last sojourn in the capital, and there was scarcely a form of hardship or a variety of disappointment it did not entail upon him. If he sold at all, it was for the meanest prices; he was badly hung at the exhibitions, and snubbed, or passed over, by most of the critics; turn which way he would, he was encountered with rejection and disdain; oftentimes he

was penniless, and once his wife and he did not so much as break bread for forty-eight hours. It was a time, however, of effort and of meditation, and ere the end of it the great painter had completed his education, and fixed upon his path in art. Michelangelo disclosed to him the mystery of gesture and expression, and taught him to inform his work with heroic and emotional meanings. From Nicolas Poussin he learned the secret of style: the true worth and significance of dignity in design, of breadth and symmetry in composition, of nobility in conception, of reticence and grandeur in execution. Finally, he studied and mastered the art of modelling in the work of Correggio; and in the portraiture of the human body—in the arrangement and apprehension of the tints and tones of living flesh, and the presentment of its aspects and its essentials—he became excellent enough to be almost notorious. He was naturally sensuous in habit; with his admirable physique, his splendid constitution, and his exuberant vigour of temperament, it would have been strange had he been otherwise. And as he was a born colourist withal, and a man who, even had he had nothing to express, would still have gone on painting, with a strong sense of physical delight in the process and its effects, it is not at all astonishing that his achievements about this time should have been mainly composed of studies in the nude. Artists called him “le maître du nu;” and as this kind of work was interesting to do, and more easily sold than work of another order, he did much of it. He would no doubt have done more, but that he chanced to overhear a conversation between two men who were staring at one of his pictures in a shop-window, when he learned that he was generally supposed to be able to do nothing else. Thereupon, with his wife’s complete approbation, he determined rather to go hungry than incur such a reproach again. To this determination he adhered with much constancy, both at the time and afterwards, though he was sometimes reduced to bartering pictures for clothes and bread, and to getting rid of his sketches at prices ranging from a franc to five francs each, and though he once lived for a whole fortnight on the sum of thirty francs, which he had earned by

painting a sign for a monthly nurse; and with the single exception of the figures in a decorative panel executed years after for a rich man's new house, he painted nudities no more. At the moment his resolve was made, it was all the more easily maintained, inasmuch as his æsthetic ideas had for some time past been tending towards expression in another and a very different form. This tendency was first revealed in a picture of a man winnowing (*Le Vanneur*, 1848) and another of a *Payanne Assise* (1849), both of them transcripts from rustic reality, and neither of them very positively successful; and it presently asserted itself further in the production of a number of sketches and studies from life and character in the streets and the suburban fields and villages. The Revolution came, and went, but Millet took no heed of it; he disliked politics, and he was absorbed in the contemplation of his idea. He fell ill of rheumatism in the joints, and suffered acutely; but illness no more turned him from his pursuit than revolution. About the same time, Ledru-Rollin bought the *Vanneur* for 500 francs, and commissioned him to paint, for 1800 francs, a picture for the State. To this end he began by producing a *Hagar and Ishmael*, life-size, or larger. But the picture did not please him, and was, besides, another essay in the nude; and in its stead he set himself to paint a scene from the life he knew, and, with infinite pains and difficulty, produced his *Faneurs et Faneuses*—a band of haymakers resting from the noontide heat, among haycocks, under the strong sunshine and the vivid sky of a French midsummer. It was his last achievement in Paris. Cholera was rife there, and the Republic had paid him for his work; so he took his wife and children away to the little inn at Barbizon, a village in the great Fontainebleau forest, already famous in the annals of French art, and destined, in connexion with Millet, and with Théodore Rousseau, whom he met there for the first time, and who remained his friend and champion and neighbour till the end, to become a place of distinct historical interest and importance.

Barbizon had seemed to Millet a pleasant spot in which to keep holiday for a month or two, till the summer heats should be spent,

and he and his could return to Paris. But he never left it again, so that his holiday visit was one that lasted full seven and twenty years.

III.

THE plain of Barbizon, and the noble forest, impressed him greatly, and for some time, with the wonder and excitement, he was like a man drunken. Fifty years before, the place had seemed interesting to Obermann himself, archetype of moral and intellectual futility as he was; and to Millet, who saw it with other eyes and to far other ends, it was a revelation of heroic facts, and even more heroic possibilities. "C'est d'un calme, d'une grandeur épouvantables," he wrote of the forest, later on; "au point que je me surprends ayant véritablement peur. . . . J'y cours quelquefois—et j'en reviens chaque fois écrasé." He could do nothing but look and dream. Then a change came over the spirit of his worship. He set to work making studies and noting his impressions—finding the days no more than five minutes long—and conveying to canvas every circumstance in the nature of his new environment, whether animate or inanimate, until he had made the whole neighbourhood his own, from the strange wilderness of the Reine-Blanche to the swarded slopes of the Bois-d'Hiver, from the dead town of Chailly-en-Bière to the moated grange of Fleury. He painted the brackens and the huge, immemorial rocks, the secular beeches and oaks, the big pines and airy birches, the glades and long avenues, the solemn skies and vasty distances, water and herbage and cloud, waste land and ploughed land and meadow. And he also painted, and painted as he found them, the men and women about him: sawing wood and binding faggots; ploughing and reaping and sowing; planting and delving; keeping sheep and herding cattle, and driving geese and leading horses; beating clothes in the stream, and carrying water from the wells, and cutting timber in the forest glades; renewing and strengthening the impressions of his younger years, and accumulating a store of facts and truths for

future service and the realization of his ideal. Soon, with the aid of his new experience, he began to design and to compose; and, after producing a number of drawings and pastels, he exhibited, in the Salon of 1850, his magnificent *Sower*, a reminiscence of Gruchy, the first of his great and representative pictures, and his first announcement in appropriate terms of the new departure taken by his genius.

The *Sower*, which was accompanied by the *Haybinders*, attracted some little attention; and Théophile Gautier, who was destined afterwards to make himself unpleasantly conspicuous by the high-handed ignorance he displayed in his dealings with Millet, deigned to find great merit in the work, and spoke warmly in its praise. The picture of the year, however, was Courbet's powerful and uncommon *Enterrement d'Ornans*, which created a sensation, and left the public indifferent to everything besides; so that the effect produced by the *Sower* and the *Haybinders* was neither deep nor lasting. Millet had revealed himself, and the revelation had delighted his friends, and astonished a few painters; and that was all. Still, his feet were in the right way, and his hand was set to the right work; and he went on as he had begun. In succession, at varying intervals, he produced his *Four Seasons*, his *Sewing Girls*, and his *Man Manuring*; his *Ruth and Boaz* and his *Shepherd*, which won him a second-class medal; his *Grafter* (1855), which Gautier called "painted Georgics," and which Rouffeau bought for 4000 francs; his mysterious and wonderful *Shepherd at the Fold*; his *Gathering Sticks in the Forest*, and his admirable *Departure for the Fields*; his incomparable *Angelus*; his *Gleaners*, a masterpiece of majesty and beauty; and his grandiose and pathetic *Expectation*, a heroic expression of the pathos of hope deferred and the dignity of forrowing old age. These achievements of genius to the contrary, the painter remained as poor as ever. He owed his butcher and his grocer; he was exposed to endless worry and annoyance from writs and executions; he is found writing to Sensier—as Maffinger and his jail-mates to their manager—for advances and loans in shillings. First his grandmother died, then his mother; and for neither death-bed was he able to raise the money that would have taken

him from Barbizon to Gruchy. He was not more successful in his art than he was unsuccessful with the public and the critics. The *Gleaners* served as a whetstone for the mannered insolence of M. Paul de Saint-Victor; the *Angelus* went begging for buyers, and was finally sold for 2000 francs; and in 1859 the famous picture, *Le Bûcheron et la Mort*, one of the most powerful and imaginative works in the whole range of modern art, was refused admission to the Salon, and had to be exhibited in a private gallery. It is not to be wondered at if Millet were often the prey of a "profond embêtement," and if now and then his thoughts found vent in the shape of pictures of suicide.

It seems certain that these crosses and troubles resulted in the breaking up of Millet's health and the shortening of his life. But not for an instant did they cause him to doubt of himself, or to modify in any way his theory of art. On the contrary, his work grew more eminently individual, became more charged with meaning, more profoundly emotional and impressive, with each successive repulse. They might talk of ugliness who would. To him beauty was identical with expression; the Beautiful was no other than the Congruous. His ideas once found, he did his utmost to convey them in forms that should be instinct with actual sentiment and the peculiar passion. In 1860 he mortgaged away his industry, for three years, for an annuity of 12,000 francs; and he took advantage of the quiet thus introduced into his affairs to plan, or finish, some of his greatest pictures. Among these mention may be made of the *Crows*, the *Woman Shearing*, the *Goose-Girl*, the *Potato-Planters*, the *Potato Harvest*, the *Shepherd at the Fold by Moonlight*, and the *Sheep-Shearing*; and there were other master-works besides. To the bitter criticism provoked by his *Expectation*, Millet replied by producing his terrible *Man Hoeing* (*L'Homme à la Houe*) (1863), a commentary on a famous passage in La Bruyère, that got him—foolishly enough—the name and fame of an anarchist in politics and a socialist in religion. This, in its turn, came in for an infinite deal of abuse; but all that Millet did was to challenge his "éternels aboyeurs," as he called the

critics, to further violence by asking their opinion (1864) of his noble *Shepherds* and his *New-Born Calf*. In 1867, eight of his most important pictures were exhibited in the Exposition Universelle, and he sent his *Goose-Girl* and his admirable *Winter* to the Salon. Next year he received the red ribbon of the Legion; and in 1876 he exhibited his *Churning Butter* and his *November*, and was, for the first time in his life, elected of the Jury. The Franco-Prussian War found him failing in health, and as lean of purse as ever. His pictures sold for such trifling sums as would nowadays be scorned by a second-year's exhibitor, and his income was mainly derived from the sale of his drawings and pastels, of which he executed upwards of ninety-five for a single dealer, a certain Gavet. At Gruchy and at Cherbourg, whither he retreated before the advance of the German armies, he sketched and painted much, producing some astonishing work in the way of landscape and coast scenery; and after his return to Barbizon he painted his portentous and mysterious *Turkey Farm*, his extraordinary and affecting *Vinedresser Resting*, and his four pictures of the four seasons, chief among them the magnificent *Autumn (Les Meules)*. For Millet, too, the times now seemed to be changing. Certain pictures of his sold for exceptionally high prices at public sales. M. de Chennevières commissioned him to decorate the Church of Sainte-Geneviève, and fixed his charge for him at 50,000 francs. He was growing in repute, and his work was beginning to be held at something like its true worth. It looked as if there were possibilities of fortune for him yet.

It was all too late, however. Trouble, incessant hard work, intense application, the prodigious amount of mental effort which Millet was wont to expend upon his pictures, had impaired a constitution of exceptional strength, and exhausted a brain of exceptional force. Early in 1875 the great painter died. He had been ailing seriously for some time, and he knew that there was no hope for him. Deep and earnest as was his piety, he was grieved to the heart that death had come so soon; he was, he said, but just beginning to see clearly into nature and art. Beethoven and he were of one family

D

as artists; and we may remember that Beethoven, as he lay dying, felt as if he had scarcely written more than a few notes.

It is almost superfluous to add that Millet became a great painter as soon as ever he was dead. The sale of his drawings, sketches, and unfinished pictures brought in some 320,000 francs; while the ninety-five pastels and designs he had executed for Gavet realized, among twenty buyers, upwards of 430,000 francs. Of late years, as much as £20 has been asked for a proof of his noble etching, *The Gleaners*, which not so very long ago was worth no more than half-a-franc at the most. The *Grafter* has risen in price from 1000 francs to upwards of £5300, the *Angelus* from 2000 francs to £8000; £5000 is asked for the *Sower*; and to acquire even a small canvas signed "Millet" under £600 or £800 is impossible. It is pitiful to think that, in itself, the man's work was just as valuable while he lived as it is now he is dead, and to reflect that, from the worldly point of view, he lived and wrought and suffered to the end that here and there a picture-dealer might make some money.

IV.

It was the function of art, as understood and practised by the Old Masters, to treat the human figure as the one thing in nature of paramount and heroic interest, and, regarding all else as of secondary importance and significance, to dignify and ennoble this central theme by imparting to it all that imagination, and accomplishment, and individuality could bestow. Landscape was an accessory; atmosphere was a thing for every painter to invent according to the necessities of his picture; light and shadow were more or less arbitrary and conventional. The interest of a composition, its central and heroic human elements apart, was not an interest of truth and nature, but one of personal invention and decorative design, of harmonious juxtapositions of tint and impressive essays in tone, of the symmetrical ordering of lines and the peculiarities and perfections of technical skill. It was to this end that the Old Masters

planned and wrought, exhausting the æsthetic possibilities of the figure in the sense in which they apprehended them, and imposing on their successors the necessity of inventing new views and new ambitions for themselves, with the alternative, if they should fail, of having perforce, however excellent their achievement, to be merely imitative in aim and unoriginal in fact. So far as we yet know, there remained but one thing for modern art to do, and that was to deal with humanity, not as the only important thing in nature, but as one part in a complex whole, an actor in a great and diversified theatre, and to essay its presentment, not as abstracted from the truth of its environment, but as influencing and influenced by the appearances of all co-related and co-existing things. The Dutchmen of the Seventeenth Century took the lead in this undertaking. They were the first to exhibit the aspects of human beings in strict relation to their natural surroundings, to assign to furniture and landscape, and above all to the subtleties and gradations of indoor and outdoor atmosphere, their due place and importance in the pictorial drama. In this endeavour the Dutch School has been followed by all the vital forces of modern painting; it is indeed on the strength of this endeavour that modern painting may be said to exist in its own right, and to be employed in the exercise of an original and appropriate function. Modern painters have assimilated much from their predecessors, but they have created largely on their own account as well; and, fought and determined by themselves, they have for the chief objects of their pursuit the personal and imaginative expression of truth in all its constituents, and the achievement of an even and perfect balance between their subject and its environment. Millet's pre-eminency as an artist is due to the fact that his work is the most complete and authoritative exposition of these new principles, especially as understood since Constable and his fresh departure towards ideal naturalism in landscape, that has as yet been uttered.

He was the painter of man in nature. He treated of sky and sea, of the foil and its fruits, of human kind and animals, of the night-

time and the day, with equal power and skill, and equal regard and understanding; and his art is the complete expression of a certain type of human life, and a certain order in human destiny. He was a great colourist, a great draughtsman, and a great artist in composition; he was a perfect master of the classic formula, and he applied his grasp of classic principles to the development of the modern idea; he was gifted with an imagination of heroic loftiness and strength, and with a wonderfully rich and potent individuality; and his work, from the *Sower* downwards, is one long testimony to the nobility of his ambition and the epic quality of his purpose.

"Je vis bien," he wrote of a drawing of Michelangelo's in the collection at the Louvre, "que celui qui avait fait cela était capable, avec une seule figure, de personnifier le bien et le mal de l'humanité." The reflection is exactly descriptive, on a narrower scale, of the nature of his own capacity and of the object of his own endeavour. He set himself to do for a class that which he held that Michelangelo could have done for the race. He was a peasant himself, and an outcome of many generations of peasants; his memory and his mind were quick with rustic experiences, and with sympathy for rusticity; and he did well when he made the eternal contest between man and nature the theme of his epic, and chose the champions on either side for his only heroes. To the things he touched with intention, he had it in him to impart a character grandiose and majestic—a note of fatefulness, a sense of large issues, a shadow of romance, a sentiment of mystery, an attribute of passionate solemnity—which lifts them into the regions of heroic poetry, and makes them no longer accidental and individual, but representative and absolute. "Il faut pouvoir faire servir le trivial à l'expression du sublime," he said on one occasion; "Il faut percevoir l'infini," on another; and these two utterances, as they explain his ambition, may be held to describe his achievement also. He catches truth in the act: like Wordsworth, when he puts all human romance into a couple of verses,—

"For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago;"

when he tells of the tall cataract haunting him like a passion, and discerns the beauty that is born of murmuring sound. He expresses the spirit of a calling in a gesture or an attitude. From his hill-sides and his darkling expanses of plain he speaks with the very voice of the ground. In a solitary figure he resumes and typifies the fortunes of a hundred generations of patient toil. He is a Michelangelo of the glebe; and his shepherds and his herdwomen are akin in dignity and grandeur to the prophets and sibyls of the Sistine frescoes.

He was chary of details, and it may be said of his accessories that they were all essentials. He was not content with mere aspects of things; he pursued their primary and innate significance as well. In the *Angelus* he sought, as he has told us, to interfuse his atmosphere with the sound of the vesper bell. His three Gleaners are in very deed "the Parcae of poverty." His Death, in *Le Bûcheron et la Mort* is august and irresistible, like the fact. His Sower toils afield with the port and gesture of the First Husbandman. His resting Labourer, in *Le Vigneron au Repos*, is a last expression of heat and weariness. Of gaiety and frolic he perceived but little in the world. He had the deep-thoughted sadness of those whose lot it is to commune much and alone with nature. When he looked upon life, he saw it full of meanings that were often pathetic, and always grave and serious; and the influence of his art is altogether elevating and ennobling. His greater pictures may be likened, in a sense, to the adagios of Beethoven. They are full of melancholy and of mystery; but their effect is both to hearten and inspire, for they are felt to be great art, and the outcome of an heroic mind and soul.

W. E. H.



ILLUSTRATIONS.

I.

CARDING.

Frontispiece.

From a very characteristic etching, *La Cardeuse*. The plate is unsigned. It was spoiled in the biting-in, the artist having forgotten it in the bath, where it lay for a whole night. It was not published until after Millet's death.

The theme is a woman carding wool. She has on a sleeveless bodice, a linen cap, a neck-handkerchief, and a coarse woollen apron; her arms are in knitted sleeves, and her feet in sabots; she rests the wool on her knee with her left hand, and works the carding-comb with her right. At her left foot is a basket of wool already carded, and at her right another basket, bottom upwards, with rolls of wool on it. In the background is a locker with a pair of scales; and to the left, behind the worker's heavy and clumsy-looking chair, are seen the nave and spokes of a great spinning-wheel.

At the Millet sale a *Cardeuse de Laine* went for 2000 francs; a *Cardeuses* for 4600.

II.

STARTING FOR WORK.

This is a reproduction, in facsimile, of one of Millet's finest etchings, *Le Départ Pour le Travail*, itself a variant, on copper, of the *Payfan et Payfanne Allant Travailler Dans Les Champs*, a picture dating from the early days of the painter's sojourn at Barbizon, and one of the first in time of his "painted Georgics" after the *Sower* (1850).

The time is early morning; the scene, the plain of Barbizon, with the houses of the village, seen from the rear, in the background. In the middle distance, to the left, is a plough, toward which, from the right, a labourer is riding his team. In the foreground are a young man and a girl, going afield through the fresh, brisk sunshine and the happy morning air: she, in her short petticoats and sabots, with a kind of grey-beard or stone runlet in one hand, and in the other the handle of the basket with which she is bonneted; he, in his blue blouse and tight trousers, with wooden shoes and a straw hat, and with a fork over his shoulder and a hand in his pocket.

It is a charming composition, full of light and air and the sense of motion, and touched with a certain frank and pleasant cheerfulness, which is a quality rare in Millet's work.

A drawing, *Le Départ pour le Travail*, in the Gavet collection, sold for 4500 francs.



STARTING FOR WORK.
(*Le Départ pour le Travail.*)

III.

GLEANING.

A reproduction, in facsimile, of the artist's own etching, *Les Glaneuses*, from the famous picture (1857).

The scene is a corn-field, in the flat country about Barbizon. In the background, a study of harvest: with wheat in ricks and in sheaves, and hovering birds in flocks, and a loading wain, and the farmer riding among his reapers. To the right, remote among trees, the farm. In the foreground, among the crisp, new stubble, in the full blaze of the implacable sunshine, the three Gleaners—an old woman and two young ones. The eldest of the band is but slightly stooped, as if she were stiff and unable, and her work were painful and hard. The others are toiling valiantly.

The etching is the author's best, and also one of the best of these times. The majestic beauty of the landscape, the brilliant atmosphere, the dignity and energy, the pathos and the mystery expressed in the three heroic figures, are not to be paralleled in modern graving.

E



GLEANING.
(*Les Glaneuses.*)

IV.

DELVING.

A facsimile; from the etching, *Les Bêcheurs*. This excellent work exists in four several states, and may be regarded as one of the master's most finished and careful essays.

The scene is again the flat about Barbizon: this time, on a piece of waste land, which runs indifferently into rolling hillock and rough level. In the extreme distance, vaguely seen, are trees and the roofs of a remote village. In the foreground are two men digging. They are in their shirt-sleeves, bare-headed and bare-breasted, and with their braces looping about their legs. The elder and nearer thrusts in his spade, laboriously and strenuously; setting his whole body to the stroke, as if the effort were too much for him. The younger, altogether at his ease, and superior to his task, is emptying his blade of clods just turned; his action is large and free, and it is evident that to him endeavour comes easily. Their hats and blouses lie on the ground hard by.

The subject appears to have interested Millet very deeply, for he has often dealt with it. It is rich in opportunity of the portraiture of gesture; and gesture—the sentiment of motion, the process of action—is one of the most striking features in his work.



DELVING.
(*Les Bécheurs.*)

V.

KNITTING.

From the admirable etching, *La Grande Bergère*, which—like *Les Bêcheurs*—exists in four states, and is therefore to be considered as a carefully wrought and highly finished work.

The shepherd's calling had a peculiar attraction for Millet. Its character and sentiment came home to him very strongly indeed. His imagination was fascinated by its qualities and essentials—the solemn loneliness, the meditativeness, the calm, the constant and inevitable association with nature; and he was never weary of painting at it. He loved and understood the sheep, too, as well as the shepherd; and with sheep afield and in the fold, by night and by day, going forth in search of pasturage at dawn and wending their homeward way through the evening twilight, at lambing-time and at shearing, he has set forth his idea of shepherding and its charges and duties in a series of pastorals of incomparable power and charm, and informed with a large and simple majesty—a Biblical feeling, as it were—that makes them doubly beautiful and impressive.

The shepherdess of the illustration is resting against a low mound, overgrown with saplings. Her staff is beside her. Her dog, a mysterious and fantastic creature—the Genius of the Fold—is watching hard by the sheep that are nibbling about the sunlit plain. Her head is dressed in a handkerchief; she wears sabots and short petticoats, and is wrapped in a great cloak, with a hood swung back over her shoulder; and she is knitting stockings bravely. In the background are the roofs and gables of a village. But the feeling of the composition is one of stillness and heat and solitude, and the pathos of an unalterable patience.



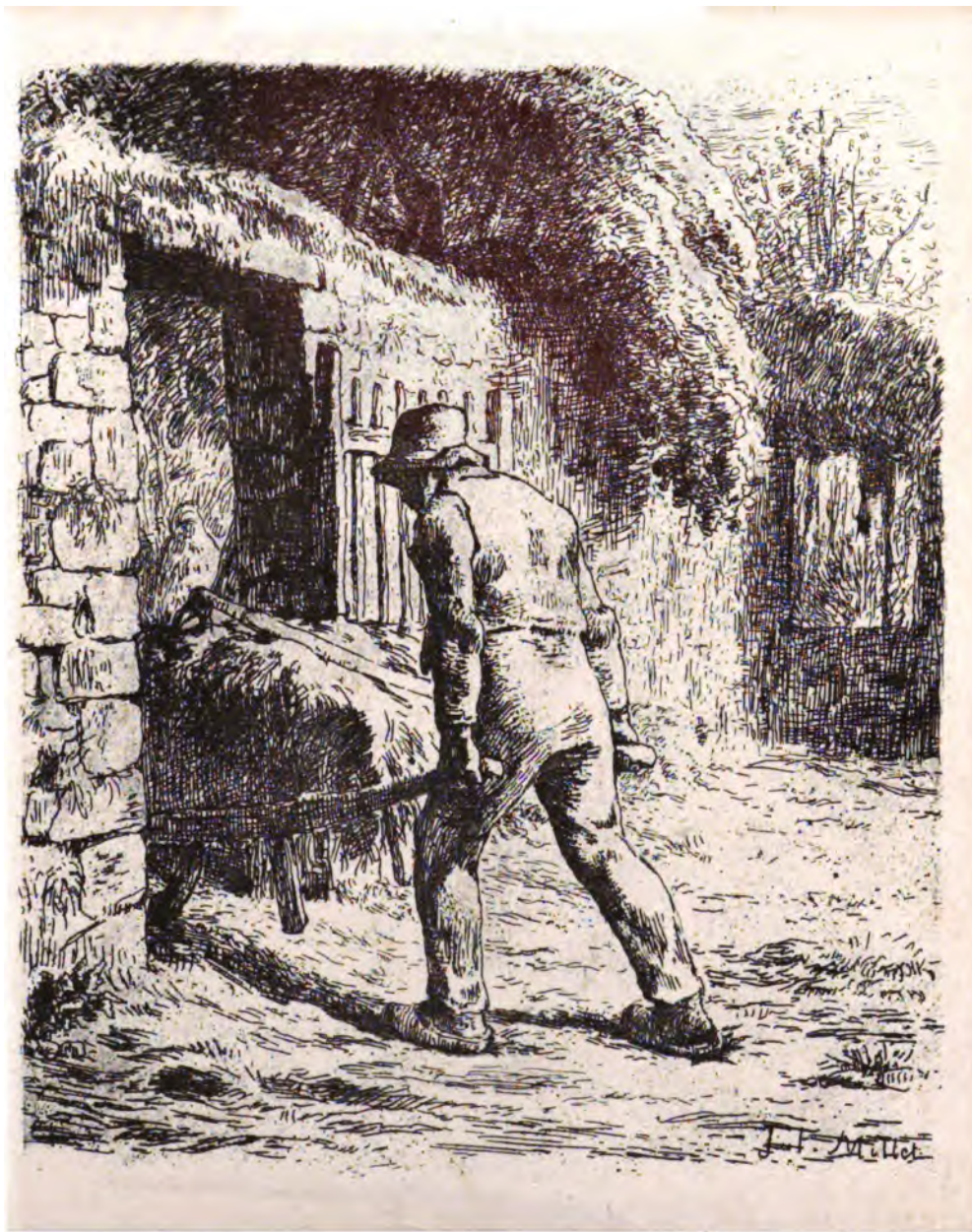
KNITTING.
(*La grande Bergère.*)

VI.

HAULING.

From the etching, *Payfan Rentrant du Fumier*.

A labourer, in a straw hat and a knitted waistcoat, is barrowing a load of manure through a gateway opening from the yard into the orchard. In the background is a well, shaded with shrubs and pendant boughs. Beyond the orchard gate are bee-hives ; fruit-trees dip and bend over the orchard wall ; and over everything is the sense of a hot, still, drowsy summer afternoon.



HAULING.
(*Paysan rentrant du Fumier.*)

VII.

CHURNING.

From the charming etching, *La Femme Qui Bat du Beurre*: a subject very dear to Millet, and very often treated by him.

In a cool dairy, with shelves full of butter-pots on the left hand, and a rough bench piled with sacks against the farther wall, a robust and comely *fermière* is butter-making, in a primitive kind of old-fashioned churn. She has a plain linen cap; her arms are bare to the elbows; her great apron falls to her sabots; and her cat, his tail waving like a flag, is expressing a general approval of things by rubbing himself against her petticoats.

A *Batteuse de Beurre* in the Gavet collection sold for 5500 francs.

F



CHURNING.

(La Femme qui bat du Beurre.)

VIII.

SEWING.

From the etching, *La Couseuse*; existing in one state only.

A cottage interior; a couple of irons on the wall, and beneath them a dresser, with a basket. To the right, a latticed window, with linen on the sill, and a pincushion. A woman sitting at her needle, her work on her knee, and her sabots showing from underneath her petticoats.

Women at needlework were another of Millet's favourite themes. His drawings and pastels and paintings of them are many.



SEWING.
(*La Couseuse.*)

IX.

SHEPHERDING.

From *La Bergère*; a woodcut in the antique style, drawn by Millet and engraved by his brother, Jean-Baptiste.

In an undulating and desolate landscape, with a couple of trees in the far distance, a young shepherdess, in a linen cap and a great hooded cloak, is pasturing her sheep. She is seated on a little mound, holding her heavy staff, as a support, between her bosom and the soil with one hand, and steadying herself in her seat with the other. Her face and attitude express a patient resignation. The effect of solitude conveyed in the design is very striking indeed.



SHEPHERDING.
(*La Bergère.*)

X.

DRAWING WATER.

From a woodcut, also in the antique style—the *Femme Vidant un Seau*. It is a replica of one of two designs, heliographed on glass by Millet, according to a method which was first suggested to him by his father; and it was drawn on the block to be cut by his brother, Pierre, as a study in engraving.

The scene is a kind of yard. A woman is filling two Norman milking-pails—they are made of brass, and are called *cannes*—from a bucket, borrowed, as may be seen from the empty chain, from the domed and covered well behind her. To left of the *cannes* is a puddle. In the background is a low wall with a doorway; and beyond, there is a flight of stone steps leading up to a cottage.

Akin to the present illustration is the famous picture, *La Femme Qui Porte des Seaux*. Millet's account of his intention in this work is characteristic and significant in a very marked degree. "J'ai tâché," he says, "de faire que ce ne soit ni une porteuse d'eau, ni même une servante, mais la femme qui vient de puiser l'eau pour l'usage de sa maison, l'eau pour faire la soupe à son mari et à ses enfants; qu'elle ait bien l'air d'en porter ni plus ni moins lourd que le poids des seaux pleins; qu'au travers l'espèce de grimace qui est comme forcée à cause du poids qui lui tire sur les bras, et du clignement d'yeux que lui fait faire la lumière, on devine sur son visage un air de rustique bonté. J'ai évité (comme toujours) avec une espèce d'horreur, ce qui pourrait regarder vers le sentimental: j'ai voulu, au contraire, qu'elle accomplisse avec simplicité et bonhomie, et sans le considérer comme une corvée, un acte qui est, avec les autres travaux du ménage, un travail de tous les jours et l'habitude de sa vie. Je voudrais aussi qu'on imagine la fraîcheur du puits, et que son air d'ancienneté fasse bien voir que beaucoup avant elle y sont venus puiser de l'eau." It is a part of his theory of art, he adds, that things should never look as if "amalgamées au hasard et pour l'occasion, mais qu'elles aient entre elles une liaison indispensable et forcée;" and that his personages "aient l'air voués à leur position, et qu'il soit impossible d'imaginer qu'il leur puisse venir à l'idée d'être autre chose."

It will be seen that Millet worked hard for his effects, and that his genius, splendidly imaginative as it was, and comprehending the world of sentiment and emotion that it did, was something of "an infinite capacity for taking pains" as well.

At the Hartmann Sale (May, 1881) a *Femme Venant de Puiser de l'Eau*—in all probability the picture referred to in this quotation—brought upwards of 78,000 francs.



DRAWING WATER.
(*Femme vidant un Seau.*)

XI.

MOWING.

From a woodcut, *La Faucheur*.

A peasant scything grass. He is in his shirt-sleeves; his whetstone is stuck into his waistband, and his feet are naked in his sabots; he wears a broad-brimmed straw hat. In the distance are other mowers, and some haycocks. There is a blaze of sunshine, and the time of day is evidently "the deep mid-noon."

This illustration is one of a series of ten, *Les Travaux des Champs*, drawn by the master on wood, and engraved by Adrien Lavielle. They were first published in the *Illustration*, for February 7th, 1853; but they were afterwards (1855) reissued, as a separate publication, by Lavielle, carefully printed on superior paper, and called *Deffins de J.-F. Millet*. They date from the early days at Barbizon, and may be referred to that period of study and contemplation which followed the fury of wonder and excitement into which the great painter was thrown by the sight of the forest and the neighbouring plain.

The *Travaux des Champs* series is completed by the nine illustrations that follow.

G



MOWING.
(*Le Faucheur.*)

XII.

RAKING.

From the second of the *Travaux des Champs*, the woodcut called *La Râteleuse*.

The scene is still the hayfield. The hay has been tedded, and is being raked and forked into cocks. The heroine plies her long wooden rake in mid-meadow, wearing a great hood to fence her eyes and her nape from the scorching sunshine.



RAKING.
(La Rateleuse.)

XIII.

TRUSSING.

From *Le Botteleur* ; in *Les Travaux des Champs*.

In the full blaze of noontide, a peasant is binding hay into trusses. A background of ricks, with an *échappée* across the meadow to a remote horizon. Half buried in a hay-cock in the middle distance, a rake and a hay-fork.

The gesture of the figure is expressive enough to make description unnecessary.



TRUSSING.
(*Le Bottilleur.*)

XIV.

REAPING.

Otherwise, *Le Scieur de Blé*.

The reaper, bareheaded and in his shirt-sleeves, his braces looping loosely about his thighs, is plying his hook among the standing corn. The sunshine lies broad and white about him; the wheat is breast high, and shuts him in, like a wall and the sky is full of birds, marauding after the ripe grain.



REAPING.
(*Le Scieur de Blé.*)

XV.

THRESHING.

From the woodcut called *Le Batteur en Grange*.

The scene is the threshing-floor within the barn. The thresher, in full relief against the light streaming in through the open door behind him, is bareheaded and barefooted. He is swinging his flail, with a gesture full of energy and veracity, above the sheaves spread out before him on the floor. There are other sheaves in rear of him, but they have passed beneath his flail, and are only sheaves of straw. In the background, a ladder is leant against the farmyard wall; and there is a tangle of branches against the clear, sunny sky.

H



THRESHING.
(*Le Batteur en Grange.*)

XVI.

SHEARING.

From *La Tondeuse de Moutons*; a sixth woodcut in the *Travaux des Champs*.

A shed in the farmyard, under cover of which the shepherd is holding down a sheep to be shorn by the *tondeuse*. She has her frock pinned up and back over her petticoats; she wears sabots and a white linen cap, like the *Cardeuse* and the *Petite Bergère*; and she holds back the fleece with one hand while she plies her shears with the other, the sheep meanwhile lying inert and absolutely passive. In the background are the thatch and chimney of the farmstead.

In France much of the shearing is done by women. This being the case, it is not surprising that the *tondeuse* should have been a favourite type of Millet's. The *Grande Tondeuse* (1861) is one of his greatest achievements; and there are others beside.



SHEARING.
(La Tondeuse de Moutons.)

XVII.

FLAX-PULLING.

From *L'Arracheuse de Lin* : yet another of the types of rustic labour portrayed in the *Travaux des Champs*.

To cut through the stalks of flax would be to make waste of them. The ripe plant has to be gathered by hand ; and, having been pulled up bodily from the ground, it is stacked in bundles to get sun-dried, just as wheat is. This operation it is that forms the subject of the present illustration.

The flax-gatherer is stooping to her task, of twisting up and bundling the stalks, in an attitude expressive of a certain amount of carefulness and pains. Hard by are sheaves already stacked for the drying. Behind her, the field unharvested, a great expanse of white then yellow, stretches away into the far distance.



FLAX-PULLING.
(L'Arracheuse de Lin.)

XVIII.

FLAX-CRUSHING.

From the companion study to the foregoing illustration, *La Broyeuse de Lin*.

Once dried, the flax is set across a long block, to which is attached a kind of beetle working on a hinge, and is crushed out between the two. By this means the useful parts of the stalk are made separable from the waste, preparatory to the several processes of manufacture.

As is shown by the illustration, flax-crushing is indoor work. The place is evidently an out-house of some sort, with a loft above, and a ladder for stairway. The operative is bare-armed, and wears a linen cap and a big coarse apron. She is just in the act of bringing down the beetle with her right hand on a sheaf of flax which she is holding across the block with her left.



FLAX-CRUSHING.
(La Broyeuse de Lin.)

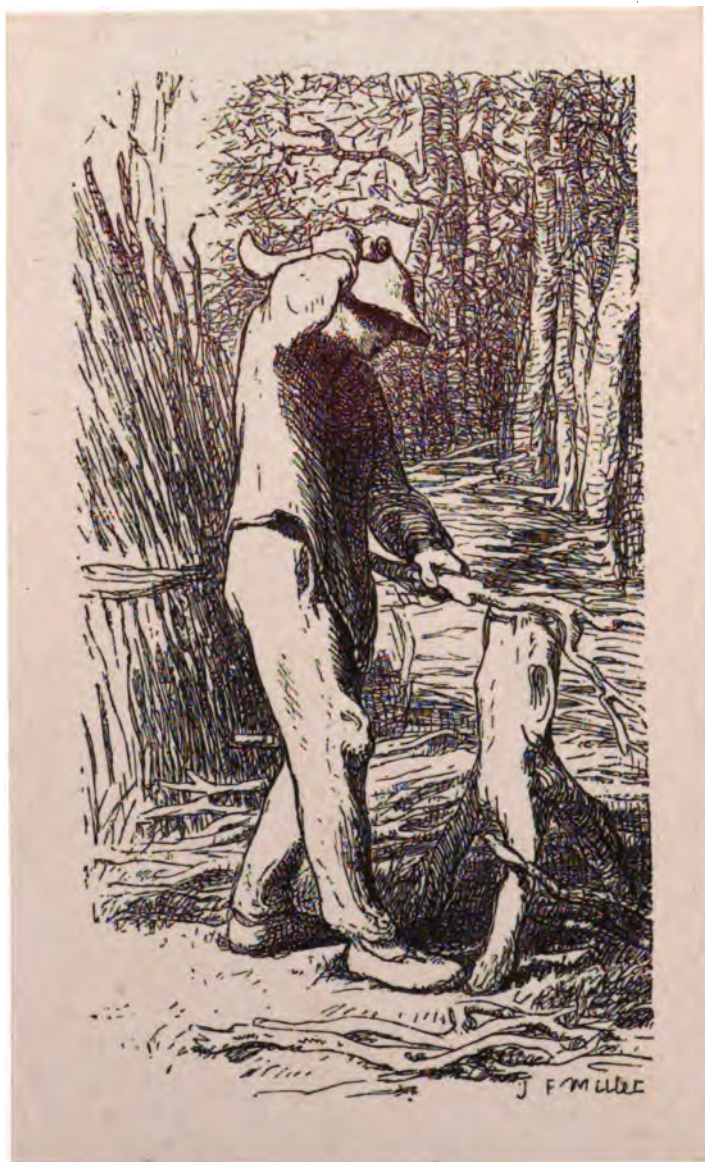
XIX.

FAGGOTTING.

From the study called by Millet *Le Faiseur de Fagots*.

The scene is an avenue in the forest. A young woodman, in a blouse and a straw hat, is cutting faggots with a bill-hook, at a rough block formed of the stump of a tree.

The ground beyond him is strewn, as far as the eye can see, with loppings thinned from the trees above ; and there is a wood-pile to the left, in the middle distance.



FAGGOTTING.
(*Le Faiseur de Fagots.*)

XX.

SPINNING.

From the last of the *Travaux des Champs* Series—a woodcut called *La Fileuse*.

In a cottage interior the spinner is sitting before the window at her wheel, her foot on the treadle, and the full rock, or distaff, in her hand. To the left of her is a basket of wool; and against the farther wall is a sack.

The spinning-wheel is as old as the spade, and as essential a feature in rustic life. "When Adam delved and Evé span," says one of the most ancient of English dittos; and a Spanish proverb makes spinning of equal importance with weeping and child-bearing in woman's existence. From Theocritus downwards, the poets and painters of rusticity have made much of the subject. "O distaff, friend of those that spin," sang the poet of Syracuse, at Theogenès, wife of Nicias, the physician of Miletus; "gift of grey-eyed Athene to dames whose hearts are fet on housewifery." * One of Béranger's prettiest little song-dramas is of a maiden spinning, spinning to ransom her bridegroom from the cruel English; and the heroine of the old Irish brigade ballad resolves to make the supreme sacrifice of her wheel, reel and rock and all,—

"To buy for my love a sword of steel,
For Willy among the rushes, O!"

to the prejudice of the same heavy-handed and high-hearted race. As for Burns, he has written of the wheel in all humours.

"Gat ye me, O gat ye me,
Gat ye me wi' naethin' ?
Rock and reel and spinning-wheel"—

says one of his heroines, "the tap o' Ecclefechan," as she calls herself. Another—a dame "whose heart is fet on housewifery," this one—sings a song of spinning that is one of the best of its author's many pleasant carols of trades. "O leeze me on my spinning-wheel," she says:—

"O leeze me on my rock and reel,
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,
And keeps me fiel and warm at e'en!"

and so on, through an association of spinning with all the charming sights and sounds of country life—with lintwhites singing, and trotting brooks, and the landrail croaking among the clover, and "the little fishes' caller reft"—until the end. In a very different key is the song of the "Weary pund o' tow," with the drunken gammer tipping as she spins, and breaking the rock across her indignant gaffer's pate.

Millet knew of spinning and the wheel from his earliest childhood. The spinner's task is the theme of one of his most charming works, the *Femme au Rouet*, a picture now in the collection of M. Georges Petit.

* In Mr. Lang's translation: Macmillan & Co., 1880.



SPINNING.
(*La Fileuse.*)



ART BOOKS PUBLISHED BY THE FINE ART SOCIETY.

Note.—The rule of the Society in publishing books is to make an issue sufficient only to meet the demand at the time of publication. By so doing they find that subscribers are materially benefitted, as their books quickly increase in value.

Mr. Ruskin's Notes on his Turner Drawings. Exhibited at The Fine Art Society's Galleries, 1878. Illustrated Large Paper Edition, consisting of 750 copies. Published £2 2s. Edition exhausted. A copy sold at Christie's, in April, 1881, for £4 4s.

The same, small paper, unillustrated, 2s. 6d.

The type of these editions has been distributed.

Mr. Ruskin's Notes on Samuel Prout and William Hunt. In illustration of a Loan Collection of Drawings exhibited at The Fine Art Society's Galleries in 1879. Edition nearly exhausted. Large Paper, Illustrated Edition, consisting of 500 copies, £2 2s.

The same, small paper, unillustrated, 1s.

The type of these editions has been distributed.

Mr. Seymour Haden's Notes on Etching. In illustration of the art, and of his Collection of Etchings and Engravings of the Old Masters, exhibited at The Fine Art Society's Galleries, 1879. Large Paper, Illustrated Edition, limited to 500 copies, £2 2s.

The same, small paper, unillustrated, 1s.

The type of these editions has been distributed.

Notes by Mr. F. G. Stephens on a Collection of Drawings and Woodcuts by Thomas Bewick. Exhibited at The Fine Art Society's Rooms, 1880. Large Paper, Illustrated Edition, limited to 300 copies. Published at 21s.; price 31s. 6d.

The same, small paper, unillustrated, 1s.

The type of these editions has been distributed.

Memoir and Complete Descriptive Catalogue of the Works of Charles Méryon. By PHILIP BURTY and MARCUS B. HUISE. 1879. Limited to 125 copies; type distributed. Published at 16s.; price 21s.

